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# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

DEDICATED TO NATURAL HISTORY AND CONSERVATION



Volume 51 Number 4

October-December 2017



Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club  
Club des naturalistes d'Ottawa

# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

Publications Mail Registration # 09798

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Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club  
Club des naturalistes d'Ottawa

— Founded 1879 —

Diane Lepage, President

**Objectives of the Club:** To promote the appreciation, preservation and conservation of Canada's natural heritage; to encourage investigation and publish the results of research in all fields of natural history and to diffuse the information on these fields as widely as possible; to support and co-operate with organizations engaged in preserving, maintaining or restoring environments of high quality for living things.

**Club Publications:** *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*, a quarterly devoted to reporting research in all fields of natural history relevant to Canada, and *Trail & Landscape*, a quarterly providing articles on the natural history of the Ottawa Valley and on Club activities.

**Field Trips, Lectures** and other natural history activities are arranged for members; see "Coming Events" in this issue.

**Annual Membership Fees:** Individual \$40

Family \$45

Student \$20

Hard copy of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*: \$30

Subscriptions to *Trail & Landscape*: (libraries and institutions): \$40 per year (volume)

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## THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB

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Views expressed in *Trail & Landscape* are not necessarily those of the OFNC.

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## On the cover:

A fledgling female Peregrine Falcon surveys her surroundings after a successful flight.

Taxation Data Centre building on Heron Road, Ottawa, 2014. Photo by Christopher Traynor.

See "Falcons in my Neighbourhood" on page 189 and "Ottawa's Falcon Watch Update" on page 190.

# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

Volume 51 Number 4, October-December 2017

Photo by A. Bélair

## Club News

- 175 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR**  
Annie Bélair
- 176 WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**  
Henry Steger
- 177 IN MEMORIAM: RAY HOLLAND**  
Roy John
- 178 CALL FOR AWARD  
NOMINATIONS**  
OFNC Awards Committee

## OFNC Research Grants

- 180 OFNC RESEARCH GRANTS:  
CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR 2018**  
OFNC Publications Committee

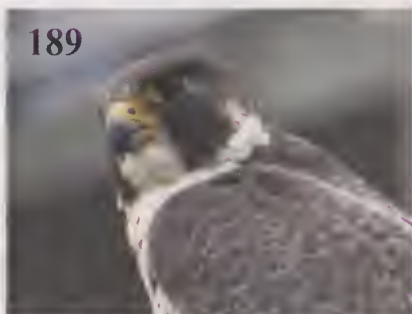
## Features

- 182 WHEN DO THE BIRDS ARRIVE?  
SPRING BIRD MIGRATION  
CHARTS FOR OTTAWA:  
1967 AND 2017**  
Gregory Zbitnew
- 189 FALCONS IN MY  
NEIGHBOURHOOD**  
Norma Mooney

182



189



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OCT 16 2017

# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

Volume 51 Number 4, October-December 2017

Photo by Blair

**190 OTTAWA'S FALCON WATCH  
UPDATE**

Chris Traynor

**193 IN PRAISE OF TURKEY  
VULTURES**

Roy John

**195 NEW SPECIES ADDITIONS  
TO THE OTTAWA-GATINEAU  
ODONATE CHECKLIST**

Chris Traynor

**198 SANCTIMONIOUS SHORTY**

Robert E. Lee

**204 A MEXICAN ARTIST COMES  
TO CANADA**

Barry Cottam

**T&L Index**

**212 INDEX TO VOLUME 51**

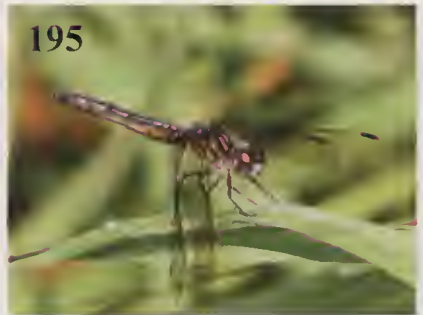
**Club Events**

**215 COMING EVENTS**

193



195



204







That was a lot work!

Then Joyce Reddoch wrote to congratulate me and said, “You have launched the second 50 years of *Trail & Landscape* in good style.”

I was very happy to receive so much positive feedback, to hear that so many of you liked the 50th anniversary issue and the new look. Many heartfelt thanks for all your comments.

And I’d like to thank all the authors and photographers who made this 80-page special issue possible, especially Rob Lee for his terrific article, “Fifty Years of Nature in and around Ottawa.” I had personally asked him to write this article, knowing that he still had his notes from forever, and the result was exactly what I wanted for T&L’s 50th birthday.

I hope this new chapter in T&L’s existence will encourage many of you to send articles, with pictures if you have some! T&L will always need content, and I don’t think I can harass Rob again – not for a few issues anyway!

Thank you again, everyone, and enjoy the rest of 2017!

Annie 🐾



# Welcome New Members

## **Ottawa Area**

Timothy Brophy  
Jenna de Jong  
Elizabeth Diem & Family  
Kathleen Driscoll & Family  
Natalie Fletcher & Family

## **Alina Gruder & Family**

Jan Huus & Family  
Richard Knapton  
Eric Lay  
Andrea Lesperance  
Brigitte Malenfant  
Kim Olsen  
Nancy Shaver & Family  
Grace Strachan  
Karen Timm  
Hervé Tremblay  
Wendy Trudel

## **Gatineau Area**

Catherine Hart & Family

## **New Brunswick**

John Klymko

## **Nova Scotia**

Ronald G. Arsenault

## **Ontario**

Geoff McVey  
Nina Zitani

Henry Steger  
Chair, Membership Committee  
September 2017 🦉

# *In Memoriam*

## **Ray Holland (1944 – 2017)**



*Ray receiving the Champion for Nature award from Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists president Brenda Boyd in 2016. Photo by Pauline Donaldson.*

OFNC member Ray Holland died peacefully at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute August 10, 2017. Ray was a lifelong birder and was active in the Ottawa area. He was a strong supporter of the Ottawa Valley Wild Bird Care Centre. In 2016 he was given the Champion for Nature award by the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists for being the “transporting angel of injured birds.” He often found rare birds, and he cheerfully shared these discoveries with anyone who was interested. His most recent find was a female Bullock’s Oriole (rare in Ontario) near his home in Pakenham, Ontario, in December 2015.

Hundreds of birders flocked to see this bird, often with Ray’s help. In January, when the temperature dropped sharply, Ray found it, half-dead, and he took it to the Wild Bird Care Centre where it was diagnosed with dehydration and hypothermia. After a few months the bird had fully recovered but remained at the centre. Ironically, on Wednesday Aug. 16, 2017, this bird was flown home to southern B.C. Ray would have been proud of this success.

Ray John



*Photos by Ray, submitted for the photo contest at the 2017 Awards Night: Eastern Screech-Owl in nest box, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Sharp-shinned Hawk.*

# Call for Award Nominations

OFNC Awards Committee



The OFNC is looking for nominations for individuals or groups (members and, in several cases, even non-members) who, by virtue of their efforts and talents in support of the Club or natural history appreciation and conservation, are deserving of special recognition. There are seven categories; for more details, see <http://www.ofnc.ca/awards.php>.

The deadline to submit nominations is **November 30**.

If you would like to nominate someone for an award, please send an email to the Chair of the Awards Committee at [ofnc@ofnc.ca](mailto:ofnc@ofnc.ca) containing the requisite supporting information (type of award, name of nominee, and reasons for nomination that support the award criteria) as well as your name and phone number. Nominate as many individuals as you wish, but be sure to give your reasons. If necessary, the Awards Committee may seek out more information on individuals nominated.

## OFNC Awards and brief criteria:

**Honorary Membership:** In recognition of outstanding contributions by a member, or non-member, to Canadian natural history or to the successful operation of the Club.

**Member of the Year:** In recognition of the member judged to have contributed the most to the Club in the previous year.

**George McGee Service Award:** In recognition of a member or members who has or have contributed significantly to the smooth running of the Club over several years.

**Conservation Award – OFNC Member:** In recognition of an outstanding contribution by a member or group of members in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley, with particular emphasis on activities within the OFNC's study area (within 50 km of the Peace Tower in Ottawa).



*2016 Member of the Year, Gordon Robertson, with OFNC President Diane Lepage.  
Photo by Colin Freebury.*



**Conservation Award – Non-member:** In recognition of an outstanding contribution by a non-member or group of non-members in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley, with particular emphasis on activities within the OFNC's study area (within 50 km of the Peace Tower in Ottawa).

**Anne Hanes Natural History Award:** In recognition of a member who, through independent study or investigation, has made a worthwhile contribution to our knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural history of the Ottawa Valley. The award is designed to recognize work that is done by amateur naturalists.

**Mary Stuart Education Award:** For members, non-members or organizations, in recognition of outstanding achievements in the field of natural history education in the Ottawa Valley. Potential recipients could include both professional and volunteer museum personnel, biology teachers, talented and dedicated field trip leaders, authors popularizing local natural history, and other educators of children or adults.

Should you wish to see who the past winners of Club awards were, visit [www.ofnc.ca/awards/winners.php](http://www.ofnc.ca/awards/winners.php). 🐾



*An appreciative crowd at the 2017 Awards Night. Photo by Colin Freebury.*

## Save the date:

The **2018 OFNC Awards Night** will take place on **Saturday, February 24, 2018**. It will start at 7:00 p.m.

St. Basil's Parish Church, 940 Rex Avenue, Ottawa.

More information will be provided in the first issue of *Trail & Landscape* in 2018.

# OFNC Research Grants: Call for Proposals for 2018

OFNC Publications Committee

The OFNC has established a fund to support field-based research activities that reflect and promote the Club's objectives within eastern Ontario or western Quebec, focused particularly upon the Club's study area – inside the 50-km radius from the Peace Tower in Ontario or Quebec.

The objectives of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club are:

- To promote the appreciation, preservation, and conservation of Canada's natural heritage;
- To encourage investigation, publish the results of research in all fields of natural history, and diffuse the information as widely as possible;
- To support and cooperate with organizations engaged in preserving, maintaining or restoring environments of high quality for living things.

**Deadline for proposal submission: 15 January 2018**

## Available Funding:

It is expected that grants will typically range from \$1000–\$3000.

## Eligibility:

Individuals, including students conducting research for their degrees, postdoctoral fellows, professors, research scientists and independent researchers.

## Types of Research Supported:

Research projects must be credibly science-based and with a measureable outcome. Given the Club's focus on natural history, field-based projects are favoured.

## Use of Funds:

Grants may be used for legitimate field-related expenses including travel, accommodation, food, equipment and supplies, etc. Grants may not be used for salary. Only a small portion of funds may be used for publication costs and/or laboratory analyses, and this must be justified in the application.



*Large Purple Fringed Orchid. Research Grant report in T&L 50(3), p. 112: "Flora of Gatineau Park: Project Summary" by Jean Faubert, Alexandre Blain and Jennifer Doubt. Photo by A. Blain.*



*Research Grant report in T&L 51(2), p. 60: "Why does Pollen Colour Vary in Trout Lily (*Erythronium americanum*)?" by Emily Austen. Photo by Shang-Yao Peter Lin.*

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## Application Process:

To apply for an OFNC research grant, please submit a project proposal with the following information. Maximum two pages.

### 1. Project title

**2. Name(s), affiliation(s) and contact information of primary researcher(s), including supervisor name for students.** The applicant(s) should indicate if they are a member of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club or a subscriber to *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*.

### 3. Project team members

### 4. Research experience (brief summary of relevant experience)

### 5. Summary of the proposed research

Describe your research project in plain language. The summary should include and/or address the following:

- Provide a brief background summary of the research topic, its relevance to the local area, and describe the questions the project is addressing.
- How does the research contribute to the objectives of the OFNC?
- Explain the methods by which the work will be conducted, including the site(s) where it will be undertaken.
- Indicate if relevant permits have been or will be obtained/applied for and if any land access permission is required.
- Describe the timeline for the project.
- If your work involves collecting specimens, state where this material will be permanently deposited.

### 6. Proposed Budget

Provide the following information:

- Amount requested from OFNC.
- Total budget for the project.
- Other sources of funding (if applicable).
- How and when OFNC will be funds be used.

### 7. Submission

Submit your proposal in PDF format by email to: Tony Gaston (tonygastonconsult@gmail.com) and Jeff Saarela (jsaarela@mus-nature.ca), with "OFNC Research Fund proposal" in the subject line of your message.

## Deliverables:

The Club expects research results to be communicated as widely as is pertinent, with submissions to *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* encouraged, if appropriate.

- State how you plan to communicate the results of your research.
- All grantees must provide a plain language summary of their results for publication in *Trail & Landscape* (the Club's quarterly newsletter that all members receive).
- Grantees may be invited to present a talk about their research at one of the Club's monthly meetings, and to communicate their work on the Club's blog, "Field Notes" (<https://ofnc.wordpress.com/home/>).

Financial support from the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club must be clearly acknowledged in all final documentation. 📎



# When do the *Birds Arrive?*

## Spring bird migration charts for Ottawa: **1967 and 2017**

Gregory Zbitnew

In the first issue of *Trail & Landscape* in 1967, Gary Hanes published a “chart showing the average arrival dates of our more common spring migrants”, based on an average of his recorded dates for the previous 10 years or so, plus some additional data from Hue MacKenzie and from some much older published data.

The current editor of T&L thought that it would be interesting to compare now versus then, hence this article.

Indeed the editor is right: it is very interesting. It should surprise no one that everything is different now compared to 1967. Aside from the almost complete turnover of the birder population and the hugely increased urban sprawl, knowledge of where the birds are has also increased. Huge databases of information (and misinformation) are at our fingertips, and communication of bird sightings can be broadcast to a large community instantaneously from the field.

In order to make this updating task more manageable, I have chosen to rely completely on the well-known eBird. Due to the structure of this database, it is not simple to search data in the traditional OFNC Study Area (50-km radius from the Peace Tower), so instead I have chosen only “Ottawa County” as the dataset for the years before 2017. Furthermore, as there is no simple way to determine first arrival dates more accurately than by week for other than the current year, the average date is simply given within that week. Since eBird was used quite a bit less five years ago, I have restricted the data to the average for the years 2012-2016. Also, no attempt was made to screen this eBird data for inaccuracies.

However, for 2017, since the data is more readily available, I have included exact dates as well as data for the entire 50-km radius.

It is much more difficult to draw conclusions from this data than to present it. Gary Hanes was well aware that his data was limited. Therefore it is next to impossible to tease out an actual change in bird arrival dates from the effect of drawing upon the sightings of dozens



*The American Robin used to be an exciting sign of spring for Ottawans, but some individuals now spend the winter here. Photo by Diane Lepage.*



of people. If you add to this the collective knowledge of where the first arrivals are likely to be, and the undeniable “competition” to be the first to post the species on eBird, it would be surprising if most “first arrival dates” were not earlier than in 1967. Indeed, according to the table, all species except nine are earlier; these nine species arrive at the same time, within the accuracy of the data.

A few facts, however, are clear. Of the 116 species on his list, one (the Loggerhead Shrike) is now very rare. Thirteen species no longer “arrive” as they are effectively winter residents, some in rather small numbers like the White-throated Sparrow, some in considerable abundance like the American Crow. It is hard to believe that the American Crow was once not present all year, but it is true. For most of these other residents, the migrants arrive in large numbers later in the year.

A number of species sometimes – or often – linger into January although they may not stay all winter. This has been noted in the table. For these species, an average first arrival date is less meaningful. Also, many bird names have changed in 50 years; in fact, 20 of the 116 species in the table have changed. Where there has been a change, the old name is in italics. Traill’s Flycatcher has been split into two species, and my data uses Alder Flycatcher. Scaup was listed in 1967, and the current data uses Lesser Scaup.

Average Arrival Dates for some Spring Migrants at Ottawa: 1967, 2017, 2012-2016

Species (in Taxonomic order)	Average arrival date published in T&L 1(1), 1967	Date of first recorded sighting on cBird in 2017 within OFNC Study Area	Average (week/month) of first recorded sighting on eBird, 2012-2016, Ottawa County*	% of years between 2012 and 2016 when species is seen early January to early February
Canada Goose	05-Apr	01-Jan	Winter resident	
Wood Duck	07-Apr	01-Jan	3 <sup>rd</sup> week March	60%
<i>American Widgeon</i> (American Wigeon)	16-Apr	01-Jan	3 <sup>rd</sup> week March	20%
Blue-winged Teal	19-Apr	09-Apr	2 <sup>nd</sup> week April	
<i>Shoveler</i> (Northern Shoveler)	22-Apr	05-Apr	4 <sup>th</sup> week March	20%
<i>Pintail</i> (Northern Pintail)	14-Apr	01-Jan	4 <sup>th</sup> week March	80%
Green-winged Teal	20-Apr	31-Mar	3 <sup>rd</sup> week March	40%
Ring-necked Duck	10-Apr	23-Feb	3 <sup>rd</sup> March	20%

\*For years when not present early January to early February.

Green Background: same arrival date as 1967 article

Species (in Taxonomic order)	Average arrival date published in T&L 1(1), 1967	Date of first recorded sighting on eBird in 2017 within OFNC Study Area	Average (week/month) of first recorded sighting on eBird, 2012-2016, Ottawa County*	% of years between 2012 and 2016 when species is seen early January to early February
<i>Scaup</i> (Lesser Scaup)	01-Apr	25-Feb	4 <sup>th</sup> week March	60%
Bufflehead	06-Apr	01-Jan	<b>Winter resident</b>	
Hooded Merganser	24-Mar	18-Feb	2 <sup>nd</sup> week March	80%
Common Loon	20-Apr	10-Apr	2 <sup>nd</sup> week April	40%
Pied-billed Grebe	02-Apr	25-Feb	4 <sup>th</sup> week March	20%
American Bittern	24-Apr	13-Apr	3 <sup>rd</sup> week April	
Least Bittern	25-May	13-May	<b>4<sup>th</sup> week May</b>	
Great Blue Heron	06-Apr	25-Feb	3 <sup>rd</sup> week March	20%
Green Heron	10-May	28-Apr	4 <sup>th</sup> week April	
Osprey	22-Apr	30-Mar	1 <sup>st</sup> week April	
<i>Marsh Hawk</i> (Northern Harrier)	09-Apr	02-Jan	3 <sup>rd</sup> week February	80%
Broad-winged Hawk	20-Apr	13-Apr	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> week April</b>	
Virginia Rail	10-May	15-Apr	3 <sup>rd</sup> week April	
Sora	25-Apr	24-Apr	<b>4<sup>th</sup> week April</b>	
<i>Common Gallinule</i> (Common Moorhen)	08-May	24-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Semipalmated Plover	17-May	17-May	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> week May</b>	
Killdeer	29-Mar	29-Mar	3 <sup>rd</sup> week March	
<i>Upland Plover</i> (Upland Sandpiper)	04-May	25-Apr	4 <sup>th</sup> week April	
Dunlin	16-May	20-Apr	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> week May</b>	
Least Sandpiper	19-May	07-May	2 <sup>nd</sup> week May	
<i>Common Snipe</i> (Wilson's Snipe)	15-Apr	01-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week April	
American Woodcock	07-Apr	28-Feb	4 <sup>th</sup> week March	
Spotted Sandpiper	06-May	20-Apr	4 <sup>th</sup> week April	

\*For years when not present early January to early February.

**Green Background: same arrival date as 1967 article**

Species (in Taxonomic order)	Average arrival date published in T&L 1(1), 1967	Date of first recorded sighting on eBird in 2017 within OFNC Study Area	Average (week/month) of first recorded sighting on eBird, 2012-2016, Ottawa County*	% of years between 2012 and 2016 when species is seen early January to early February
Greater Yellowlegs	27-Apr	01-Apr	2 <sup>nd</sup> week April	
Lesser Yellowlegs	30-Apr	16-Apr	3 <sup>rd</sup> week April	
Herring Gull	27-Mar	01-Jan	<b>Winter resident</b>	
Mourning Dove	03-Apr	01-Jan	<b>Winter resident</b>	
Black-billed Cuckoo	21-May	17-May	3 <sup>rd</sup> week May	
Common Nighthawk	20-May	09-May	3 <sup>rd</sup> week May	
Whip-poor-will	04-May	27-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Chimney Swift	05-May	30-Apr	4 <sup>th</sup> week April	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	15-May	05-May	2 <sup>nd</sup> week May	
Belted Kingfisher	10-Apr	05-Jan	1 <sup>st</sup> week April	40%
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	17-Apr	05-Mar	1 <sup>st</sup> week April	
<i>Yellow-shafted Flicker</i> (Northern Flicker)	14-Apr	01-Jan	<b>Winter resident</b>	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	22-May	02-May	2 <sup>nd</sup> week May	
<i>Traill's Flycatcher</i> (Alder Flycatcher)	29-May	27-Apr	2 <sup>nd</sup> week May	
Least Flycatcher	11-May	28-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Eastern Phoebe	06-Apr	29-Mar	1 <sup>st</sup> week April	
Great Crested Flycatcher	11-May	27-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Eastern Kingbird	08-May	28-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Loggerhead Shrike	17-Apr		<b>Now very rare</b>	
<i>Solitary Vireo</i> (Blue-headed Vireo)	07-May	19-Apr	4 <sup>th</sup> week April	
Red-eyed Vireo	17-May	28-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	

\*For years when not present early January to early February.

Green Background: same arrival date as 1967 article

Species (in Taxonomic order)	Average arrival date published in T&L 1(1), 1967	Date of first recorded sighting on eBird in 2017 within OFNC Study Area	Average (week/month) of first recorded sighting on eBird, 2012-2016, Ottawa County*	% of years between 2012 and 2016 when species is seen early January to early February
<i>Common Crow</i> (American Crow)	04-Mar	01-Jan	<b>Winter resident</b>	
Horned Lark	23-Feb	01-Jan	<b>Winter resident</b>	
<i>Rough-winged Swallow</i> (Northern Rough-winged Swallow)	29-Apr	12-Apr	3 <sup>rd</sup> week April	
Purple Martin	23-Apr	23-Apr	3 <sup>rd</sup> week April	
Tree Swallow	08-Apr	02-Apr	4 <sup>th</sup> week March	
Bank Swallow	01-May	19-Apr	4 <sup>th</sup> week April	
Barn Swallow	23-Apr	09-Apr	2 <sup>nd</sup> week April	
Cliff Swallow	02-May	11-Apr	4 <sup>th</sup> week April	
House Wren	03-May	22-Apr	4 <sup>th</sup> week April	
Winter Wren	24-Apr	15-Jan	1 <sup>st</sup> week April	20%
<i>Long-billed Marsh Wren</i> (Marsh Wren)	17-May	10-May	2 <sup>nd</sup> week may	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	12-Apr	01-Jan	<b>Winter resident</b>	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	23-Apr	10-Apr	2 <sup>nd</sup> week April	
Eastern Bluebird	18-Apr	02-Jan	4 <sup>th</sup> week March	20%
Veery	10-May	02-May	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Swainson's Thrush	16-May	08-May	2 <sup>nd</sup> week May	
Hermit Thrush	21-Apr	01-Jan	1 <sup>st</sup> week April	60%
Wood Thrush	12-May	28-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
American Robin	26-Mar	01-Jan	<b>Winter resident</b>	
<i>Catbird</i> (Gray Catbird)	13-May	29-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Brown Thrasher	29-Apr	13-Apr	3 <sup>rd</sup> week April	

\*For years when not present early January to early February.

Green Background: same arrival date as 1967 article



Species (in Taxonomic order)	Average arrival date published in T&L 1(1), 1967	Date of first recorded sighting on eBird in 2017 within OFNC Study Area	Average (week/month) of first recorded sighting on eBird, 2012-2016, Ottawa County*	% of years between 2012 and 2016 when species is seen early January to early February
Ovenbird	13-May	02-May	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Northern Waterthrush	06-May	27-Apr	4 <sup>th</sup> week April	
Black-and-white Warbler	07-May	28-Apr	4 <sup>th</sup> week April	
Tennessee Warbler	17-May	24-Apr	2 <sup>nd</sup> week May	
Nashville Warbler	06-May	27-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
<i>Yellowthroat</i> (Common Yellowthroat)	14-May	30-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
American Redstart	13-May	02-May	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Cape May Warbler	09-May	02-May	2 <sup>nd</sup> week May	
<i>Parula Warbler</i> (Northern Parula)	12-May	29-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Magnolia Warbler	15-May	04-May	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Bay-breasted Warbler	17-May	13-May	2 <sup>nd</sup> week May	
Blackburnian Warbler	12-May	02-May	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Yellow Warbler	06-May	22-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	14-May	02-May	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Blackpoll Warbler	24-May	02-May	2 <sup>nd</sup> week May	
Black-throated Blue Warbler	10-May	28-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Palm Warbler	05-May	13-Apr	3 <sup>rd</sup> week April	
<i>Myrtle Warbler</i> (Yellow-rumped Warbler)	29-Apr	12-Apr	2 <sup>nd</sup> week April	40%
Black-throated Green Warbler	08-May	28-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	

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Species (in Taxonomic order)	Average arrival date published in T&L 1(1), 1967	Date of first recorded sighting on eBird in 2017 within OFNC Study Area	Average (week/month) of first recorded sighting on eBird, 2012-2016, Ottawa County*	% of years between 2012 and 2016 when species is seen early January to early February
Canada Warbler	20-May	14-May	2 <sup>nd</sup> week May	
Wilson's Warbler	19-May	14-May	2 <sup>nd</sup> week May	
Chipping Sparrow	26-Apr	13-Jan	1 <sup>st</sup> week April	40%
Field Sparrow	25-Apr	10-Apr	2 <sup>nd</sup> week April	
Fox Sparrow	18-Apr	20-Jan	1 <sup>st</sup> week April	20%
<i>Slate-coloured Junco</i> (Dark-eyed Junco)	05-Apr	01-Jan	<b>Winter resident</b>	
White-crowned Sparrow	10-May	28-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	20%
White-throated Sparrow	25-Apr	01-Jan	<b>Winter resident</b>	
Vesper Sparrow	16-Apr	09-Apr	2 <sup>nd</sup> week April	
Savannah Sparrow	18-Apr	09-Apr	2 <sup>nd</sup> week April	
Song Sparrow	25-Mar	01-Jan	<b>Winter resident</b>	
Swamp Sparrow	26-Apr	06-Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> week April	
<i>Rufous-sided Towhee</i> (Eastern Towhee)	06-May	14-Apr	2 <sup>nd</sup> week April	
Scarlet Tanager	18-May	12-May	2 <sup>nd</sup> week May	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	13-May	01-Jan	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Bobolink	14-May	02-May	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Red-winged Blackbird	18-Mar	05-Jan	3 <sup>rd</sup> week February	40%
Eastern Meadowlark	29-Mar	02-Apr	4 <sup>th</sup> week March	
Rusty Blackbird	10-Apr	02-Mar	4 <sup>th</sup> week March	20%
Common Grackle	28-Mar	17-Feb	1 <sup>st</sup> week March	20%
Brown-headed Cowbird	26-Mar	21-Jan	1 <sup>st</sup> week March	40%
Baltimore Oriole	10-May	02-May	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Purple Finch	23-Feb	01-Jan	<b>Winter resident</b>	

\*For years when not present early January to early February.

Green Background: same arrival date as 1967 article

# Falcons in my Neighbourhood

*Norma Mooney*

On July 12, two Peregrine Falcons were spotted on Ohio Street near Billings Bridge Shopping Centre. The first, a juvenile by its dark colouring, was observed perched atop the southwest corner of the Billingswood Manor, having made a kill of a small black bird which lay on the pavement below. The young falcon loudly squawked his presence for at least 10 minutes. In the meantime, a second bird, an adult by its lighter and more distinct head markings and bright yellow talons, flew in and landed on a telephone pole diagonally across the street.

In the opinion of the OFNC, these birds are the ones that nest yearly at the Data Centre near Billings Bridge. (See page 190.) According to their information, three chicks fledged this year, all of which survived.

One can only conjecture whether the juvenile “squawked-in” the adult bird to have a look; it appeared that mom or dad, upon arrival, surveyed the scene to her/his satisfaction and left. The juvenile left shortly after that. I wonder if anyone else has observed these birds in Heron Park? 🦅

*Photos:*

*Top: An adult Peregrine Falcon stops for an inspection.*

*Bottom: A juvenile Peregrine Falcon looks around uncertainly.*

*Ohio Street, Ottawa, July 12, 2017.*

*Photos by Margaret Thom.*





*A female Peregrine Falcon chick  
tests her wings before her first flight.  
Photo by Chris Traynor.*





# Ottawa's Falcon Watch Update

*Chris Traynor*

I've been asked numerous times over the last few years about the status of the OFNC Falcon Watch, so perhaps it is time for an update.

The OFNC Falcon Watch started in 1997 when Ottawa's first nest of Peregrine Falcons was discovered on the former Citadel Inn at Lyon and Albert streets. For the next decade, our local falcons succeeded in raising many chicks to adulthood.

In 2009, two chicks managed to fledge but this would be the last year that any eggs from this nest site hatched. Annual nest checks showed that the pair was producing eggs but none of them were hatching. Many of us suspected that toxins in the environment were causing problems with the eggs. There also appeared to be some evidence that local pigeons were being poisoned. As pigeons are a common prey item for peregrines, it seemed logical to conclude that this was another possible cause of the falcon's inability to hatch a good egg.

To complicate matters for us, several years ago the Falcon Watch lost its roof access to adjacent buildings to monitor the nest, making it difficult to check on the falcons. However, peregrines are quite noisy around the nest, especially when they have chicks, so we're quite confident that they have not had a successful nesting without our knowing about it.

In 2012, after another unsuccessful nest attempt downtown, it was discovered that another pair of peregrines was nesting on the Taxation Data Centre building on Heron Road. This was exciting news! There was speculation at the time that the pair may have also nested in the previous year, but details were sketchy. Since the downtown watch was now more or less defunct, we decided to switch our limited volunteer time to the Data Centre pair. In 2012, the falcons, now named Rowena and Ivanhoe, fledged two birds and, in 2013, one. A good bounce-back year in 2014 saw them raise three more chicks. Since they've been at the Heron Road nest site for at least six years and they've raised a dozen chicks without any of them needing rescue, we came to the conclusion that our rescue efforts, which had been vital downtown, were not needed at this location. This particular location has the advantage of being rather isolated in terms of other nearby buildings, so when a young



*Female Peregrine Falcon chick after a successful flight. Photo by C. Traynor.*

falcon takes its first flight it has few options other than to turn around and try and land on the same building it took off from. This would appear to be an easier task than negotiating the tunnels of glass towers downtown where there were too many options available. The first flights of many a young falcon ended in tragedy when they could not tell a glass facade from the sky.

Happily, the Heron Road location seems to be ideally suited for peregrine nesting. It has a nest ledge that is sheltered from extreme weather and long, wide ledges for testing out the wings before first flight. Those of us who still go to observe the young birds have seen some remarkable first flights, and we look forward to many more. I would encourage OFNC members to go and visit this site anytime to watch these amazing birds. 🦅



# In Praise of Turkey Vultures

Roy John

Photo by Roy John

When I first arrived in Canada in 1965, Turkey Vultures (a TV to its friends) were not very common. Despite living in Sarnia and making many visits to Point Pelee, I saw only a few birds each year. After moving to Ottawa in 1984 I saw them even less often, as I appeared to be too far north of the bird's range. This has changed, and TVs are now often seen during the warmer months.

The Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*), or buzzard, is not related to the vultures or buzzards of Europe, Africa, and Asia. The Eurasian buzzards are Buteos like our own Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*). Old World vultures belong to the family Accipitridae, which also includes eagles, Eurasian buzzards, kites, and hawks, and so they are true "hawks."

The New World vultures and condors look like their Old World counterparts as their evolution has been convergent. They evolved similar sizes, shapes and body parts and perform the same ecological role. Taxonomists seem to have difficulty deciding who TVs' closest relatives are. The most recent research places our vulture between owls and the Cuckoo Roller. (The Cuckoo Roller [*Leptosomus discolor*] is an oddball species whose taxonomic position is also unclear. Furthermore, the same research puts falcons next to parrots!)



The TV has a bare red head and a big body covered in dark feathers similar to that of the male Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), so at least its common name make sense. The vulture is a scavenger of dead animals, cleaning up the carnage along our highways. To find food it uses its sharp eyes and keen sense of smell. It flies low so that it can detect the scent of ethyl mercaptan, the first gas produced by microorganisms when dead animals decay. (This gas is added to gas pipelines to aid in leak detection. If you see TVs circling a pipe, call the gas company.) Mercaptans are also key components of a skunk's spray. TVs prefer freshly dead bodies over those that are starting to putrefy. Apparently insects (or their maggots) produce revolting waste products to keep away scavengers.

TVs are a common bird with an estimated world population about 4,500,000. I have seen this species from Ontario all the way to Cape Horn in southern Chile. TVs seem to prefer open areas and degraded forest. In South America, in zones where the landscape is more forested, the TV numbers drop and the Greater Yellow-headed Vulture (*Cathartes melambrotus*) takes over.

It is fortunate that our TVs are not related to the Old World vultures. In parts of Asia, the vulture population has plummeted by as much as 99%. This was due to an effective veterinary, anti-inflammatory drug called diclofenac used for cattle. Diclofenac is highly toxic to true vultures and they pick it up when they eat carcasses. This drug has little effect on our unrelated vultures.

So TVs may not have the most handsome head, but their bodies and wings are impressive. Their efficient, gliding flight is fun to watch, as their flight feathers glint silver in the sun. They silently (they do not have a syrinx) go about cleaning up dead bodies. Their powerful gastric juices destroy disease-causing organisms. A quiet, hardworking, useful member of society, the TV deserves at least our respect. 🐺



Photo by Roy John





*Male Eastern Amberwing,  
Petrie Island.  
Photo by Chris Traynor.*

# New Species Additions to the Ottawa-Gatineau Odonate Checklist

*Chris Traynor*

In 1998, Chris Lewis and Bob Bracken published "A Checklist of the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Ottawa-Gatineau." This checklist included notes on occurrence, habitat types, environmental conditions and local status for the 119 species recorded in the region at the time. The checklist was updated in 2008 with new species being added: *Tramea lacerata* (Black Saddlebags), *Gomphus quadricolor* (Rapid's Clubtail), *Enallagma annexum* and *Enallagma vernale* (Northern and Vernal Bluet), which were formerly one species, *Enallagma cyathigerum* or Common Bluet. Two species, *Sympetrum Janae* (Jane's Meadowhawk) and *Arigomphus villosipes* (Unicorn Clubtail) were removed from the checklist.



*Citrine Forktail, Burnt Lands Alvar.*  
*Photo by Ruth Allison.*

The Black Saddlebags is a migratory species and it has not established any breeding territories in our region yet. The Rapid's Clubtail, which has the unfortunate distinction of being the first Ontario dragonfly to be declared an endangered species, can be found with some difficulty along the Mississippi River at Pakenham, Blakeney and Almonte. The Northern and Vernal Bluets are common species in our region in the appropriate habitat.

In September 2008, shortly after the checklist was last updated, the *Ischnura batata* (Citrine Forktail) was added near Almonte. Over 110 individuals of this very small damselfly species were found that year in temporary pools at the Burnt Lands alvar. Though this species was found that year in good numbers, it has not been found since then. The next new species added was *Pachydiplax longipennis* (Blue Dasher). This species was discovered in 2010 by Christine Hanrahan at the Baxter Conservation area along the Rideau River. The northward expansion of this species continued the following



*Male Blue Dasher, Petrie Island.*  
*Photo by Chris Traynor.*

summer, with the Blue Dasher being found in numerous locations along the Ottawa River (Petrie Island, Mud Lake, Shirley's Bay), as well as in other wetlands. Now they're even showing up at the local storm water containment ponds. Strong populations now exist, especially at Petrie Island, where this exotic looking creature may be the most frequently encountered dragonfly.

The next addition was *Perithemis tenera* (Eastern Amberwing). This species was encountered in numerous locations on both the Ontario and Quebec sides of the Ottawa River in the summer of 2012. In a few short years it has established itself in several locations, most notably Petrie Island. The Eastern Amberwing is a very small dragonfly and can easily be missed as it is not much larger than a wasp and somewhat similarly coloured.

The additions of Citrine Forktail, Blue Dasher and the Eastern Amberwing bring the regional total to 123 species. As Lewis and Bracken noted in the original checklist, this is a remarkable total for such a small geographical area.



*Female Blue Dasher, Petrie Island.*  
Photo by Chris Traynor.

“A Checklist of the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Ottawa-Gatineau” is available on the OFNC website at <http://www.ofnc.ca/tandl/Dragonflies-damselflies.php>.

Editor’s note: In her article “Ode-ing in Ottawa’s Urban Ponds” (*Trail & Landscape* 51(1), pages 10-12), Mary Ann Perron stated that the Eastern Amberwing she had observed was a new species for the area, when in fact it had been found several years earlier, as noted in this article. 🐉

### References

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*Female Eastern Amberwing, Kanata.*  
Photo by Gillian Mastromatteo

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# Sanctimonious Shorty

by Robert E. Lee

When I'm out in the woods, I see Red Squirrels more often than any other mammal. I have been seeing them all my life, of course, but a few years ago I realized that I had learned almost nothing about them – just that they chase each other furiously, and angrily scold intruders. So I started paying attention, and began adding the observations to my daily nature notes.

Things got interesting in the summer of 2014. All that August, while I was cutting my winter's supply of maple, ironwood, and poplar firewood, Red Squirrels were going up into the tops of the big White Pine trees and dropping the green, growing cones, which were initially about three inches long. They carried them off clamped between their front teeth, like huge cigars.

I was surprised to see that they ate most of the cones right away, rather than storing them for the long, cold winter ahead. They could take one apart in about 30 seconds, getting a fat little pine seed from under each scale and removing each individual husk.

Fresh pine cones are dripping with resin, and for six weeks every squirrel's lips were blackened with pine gum and dirt. They didn't like it, and tried to wipe their faces off in my piles of sawdust. Late in the summer, when the cones were about five inches long but still tightly closed, the squirrels switched over to storing them. (If they'd left them on the trees, they'd have dried out and opened, releasing the seeds to the four winds.)

By December, each Red Squirrel was guarding a great stash of cones. Before the snow came, I counted as many as 300 big, late-season cones in some above-ground piles, and knew they had more hidden underground.

For my part, I had gathered a great pile of wood in front of my woodshed, ready for splitting into firewood. I worked at it for an hour or two each winter day, giving me the advantage of being rooted to one spot so that I could see the same animals every day. And the squirrels had the opportunity to get used to me.

I would see nothing of them at first, but about five minutes after I had arrived and begun to swing my axe, the squirrels came out of hiding and went about their lives. I soon became aware that five or six were living close around me, each on an exclusive territory 30 or 40 yards across. They spent their days systematically dismantling pine cones, one after another. They'd hold them by both ends, as we would a cob of corn, and chip single scales away with their teeth. Too fast to see – I had to study a video recording frame-by-frame – they'd momentarily bring their paws together to steady the exposed seed and





*In summertime, the squirrels were eating green White Pine cones as fast as they could cut them down. This one, about 4 inches long, has been reduced to a pock-marked central axis and a pile of green-tipped scales behind it. The squirrel had plucked a seed out of each pocket and husked it, leaving the split shells in the foreground. For winter use, they stored the cones whole, and dismantled them the same way. Photo by Rob Lee.*

remove the husk. Swallowing the seeds, they'd drop the inedible scales, husks, and eventually cone axis onto a growing pile, which people call a midden.

All Red Squirrels look alike, but I learned to tell my woodshed neighbours apart by their habitual eating places and their territorial calls. To declare territory, they adopted a stiff posture with head thrown back and mouth open, as though shouting in one particular direction, and let out a long, rolling chatter. This call I took as a message from one squirrel to another, or even to all others: *I AM HERE AND DON'T YOU FORGET IT!*

I gave the nearest squirrels nicknames: "Shorty," who was straight in front of me, for the brevity of his call (typically 1½ seconds); "Trailer," to my right, because his more typical 6-seconds of chattering got lower as it trailed off; and "Squealer," on my left, who ended each declaration with a few squeals. There was also a quiet squirrel behind the shed that sometimes investigated my woodpiles with barely audible squeaks.

Something bad happened the day after Christmas. I discovered the remains of a Red Squirrel on the snow, just the red fur and a bit of the tail. These bits lay where the four territories came together. I thought the predator might have been a hawk, because it had plucked its victim. Which squirrel was it? Whose voice would fall silent?

I found out before anybody said a word. Trailer, who had never before come near me, practically ran over my feet on his way to Squealer's favourite perch, a distance of about 50 yards. He dove into the snow beside Squealer's midden, came up with a cone, cigar-fashion, and carried it right past me again, straight back to the center of his own territory. In a minute he had returned, and all day long stole Squealer's cones, as fast as he could. Shorty, who lived between the two, just sat motionless on his perch, watching.



*Shorty on his favourite perch in seeming bliss, before his food supply ran out (March 12th). Photo by Rob Lee.*

It occurred to me that by paying attention to where a neighbour kept its food supply, and noticing when it died, the surviving squirrel might save itself from starving to death. But why wasn't Shorty taking his share? He was Squealer's nearest neighbour (only 20 yards). Maybe, I thought, he had set aside so many pine cones he smugly felt he didn't need any more.

Suddenly, however, Shorty had had all he could take and gave voice to whatever it was he was truly feeling. Shorty, he of the 1.5-second sound bite, let loose a 15-second burst of noise, sucked in a breath, and

chattered his outrage again and again, not stopping for 70 seconds. And then he fell silent and resumed watching the plunder of Squealer's life's savings.

Trailer didn't bother to respond; he kept on running back and forth. But he didn't get all of Squealer's cones. Ribbons of tracks on the snow showed that a squirrel from beyond my vision had been helping himself, too.

Thereafter, the winter turned cold and long. My firewood split more easily when the temperature was minus 25 °C, but on those days the squirrels did not come out at all, so far as I could see or hear. When the sun shone warmly, however, they sat on their perches and consumed their stores of pine cones as though there was no tomorrow. There seemed to be no thought of rationing, of saving back something for later. The middens grew and grew. I wondered what would happen if anybody ran out of cones.

January and February of 2015 passed like this, the middens growing and my woodshed steadily filling with firewood. Then one day (March 12<sup>th</sup>), I saw Shorty leave his perch and skip nervously over toward where Trailer had kept his cone pile. He didn't go for the main thing, but nosed around over the open snow until he found a loosely covered cone and ran home with it. Instead of eating it, though, or burying it, he stuck it in a knot-hole in a maple tree. And then he edged back for another one, which he jammed into a fork in an Ironwood branch. A third he tucked into the snow at the base of a cedar tree. Then a squirrel from farther away came searching for Trailer's cones. Had Trailer, too, now met his end?

Not at all, I soon saw. He had just been away for a short time (possibly stealing somebody else's cones) and when he discovered the invasion, wasted no time in driving off the raiders.

There were shallowly buried cones on Shorty's territory, too. This came to light the next day, March 13<sup>th</sup>, when Shorty was chasing an intruder and they both stopped abruptly. The lead squirrel pulled a cone out of the snow and began to eat it, with Shorty sitting quite still just two or three feet away. And then the chase resumed.



*In a sign that his cone cache was exhausted, Shorty descended to his refuse pile and picked up a cone he'd casually discarded a few days earlier (March 19th).*

In contrast with the furious chases that fill a Red Squirrel's life, this pursuit seemed almost relaxed.

Even though Shorty was just a couple of feet behind, the intruder wasn't running terribly hard, and at times stopped momentarily, allowing him to catch up. Over the course of an-hour-and-a-half, catching up led to touching, and touching led to Shorty laying both paws on her flanks – for I now figured the intruder to be a female. But she was inconstant in her attentions, and at times I saw her being chased by another male. I have seen before how this kind of chase ends.

When I got back to my wood-splitting a week later, life had returned to normal. Squirrels were pushing their boundaries, and being chased back with full vigour – through the treetops when the snow was deep and fluffy, and over the crusted snow after thaws.

As I swung my axe, I wondered about those lightly buried pine cones that Shorty had stolen from Trailer's snow. They couldn't be leftovers from earlier in the season, because they were in the recently formed top of the snowpack. And they couldn't be newly fallen from the treetops, because the squirrels had cleaned them out half-a-year before. I came to think that each male had set them out to entice females onto his territory.

Not long after this, Shorty came to the end of his cache of cones and could no longer run down to his cellar for more. On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, I saw him rummaging around in his own midden for unfinished bits of cones he'd discarded in the rich days of winter, like someone hunting for food scraps in the back of the refrigerator. Whatever he found helped him eke out an existence through to the end of May, but by then he seemed very thin.

In the meantime, the quiet female squirrel was spending more and more time in my woodshed. She calmly watched me building up row upon row of wood, and even turned her back on me for long minutes at a time. In early April, I noted that she "looks fat." I don't know for sure how that turned out, because I had split and piled all the wood on hand and closed the door for the season.



As spring developed, all the squirrels seemed to disappear from the forest around my woodshed – there was no other food for them. I supposed they had withdrawn to the cedar swamps over the hills. Shorty – I presume it was he – came back only once to chatter his typically abbreviated declaration of possession.

The big White Pines that are scattered through the forest had sustained a fairly dense (and acrimonious) Red Squirrel population in the mainly deciduous forest around my woodshed for about 11 months, from July 2014 through May 2015. But White Pines bear cones only every second or third year, and there were no Red Squirrels to be seen or heard thereabouts in the winters of 2016 or 2017.

In January of this year, however, an ice storm knocked down some branches from high up, and I saw they bore masses of partly developed cones, not even an inch long. It has been no surprise, then, that during July, Red Squirrels were moving back into my woods. In a repeat of what must be a traditional pattern, they have been cutting down the green cones, and eating them on the spot.

For my part, I have been cutting up newly dead and dying trees for firewood during the summer. Already I am anticipating an active observing season around my chopping block next winter.

Most of what I observed in the winter of 2015 was surely normal squirrel behaviour, and will be repeated this coming winter. But I remain intrigued by one event above all others. Why did Shorty refuse to help himself to the deceased Squealer's food cache when it was being plundered right under his nose? And what prompted him to express such outrage when Trailer's raid had already been going on for hours?

If Shorty had been a human, I might have thought he'd been hypocritical, or perhaps sanctimonious, for denouncing Trailer's raid then, only to stoop to stealing himself some time later. He must have known his own cupboard was nearly bare – he ran out only ten days later. Had Shorty and Squealer been friends, or family? *Something* in his personality, or in the relations between individuals, had prevented him from acting in his own self-interest, and given rise to such strong feelings that he was unable to contain them. ❧



*Shorty's view of my woodshed in early February, before I had split much wood. Cones from the big pines scattered among the deciduous trees sustained him and the other Red Squirrels from July, 2014 through the following May. Photo by Rob Lee.*





***Squirrel acrobatics!***

*Red squirrels cut cones in several species of evergreens, including spruce, as pictured here.*

*Fletcher Wildlife Garden, October 2015.*

*Photo by Barry Cottam.*





# A Mexican Artist Comes to Canada

By Barry Cottam

In an age of photographic images, with billions of photos online taken by an increasingly rich variety of technologies, one may be surprised to learn that bird illustration by pre-photographic methods – painting and drawing by hand – is still alive and well. Indeed, googling “bird illustration drawing painting” produces a number of interesting results showing just that. But why would someone choose such a long and difficult course? Many reasons come to mind, some relating to how we become interested in nature in the first place, others to the almost hidden benefits of taking the time and effort to paint.

As a nature photographer, I am interested in seeing. I want to see what is around me in the natural world and to preserve a record of it. But compared to the visual demands of painting, seeing through a camera viewfinder involves quick decisions, not long and deliberate observations. Close examination comes later, usually beginning with a preliminary assessment of the quality of the photo – is it worth keeping or not? It’s delete or keep and on to the next. Only later – if later ever comes! – does one turn to the study of individual photos closely enough to attempt, with rare success, to identify to species.

*Image above: Painting of a Mexican Jay by Evaristo Hernández Fernández.*

*Left: Evaristo at the Sierra de Manantlan Biosphere Reserve in Jalisco State, Mexico, while researching woodpeckers and other cavity birds for his master’s degree in November 2014. Photo by Pablo Neri.*



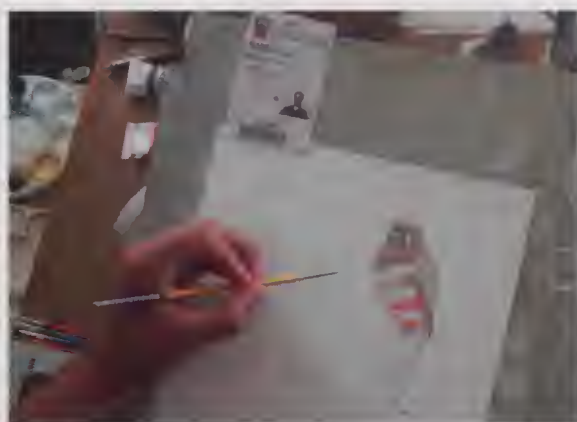
For a painter, a photograph may merely be a place to start, one element, combined with others, including memory, sketches from the field, study of related images, in producing a picture that requires hours of close effort, not seconds. A good deal of knowledge is required for this, of anatomy, behavior, habitats, as well as the ability and patience to observe the subject closely and accurately. This approach is not for everyone, obviously, but fortunately for us, one young Mexican lad very early found drawing and painting to be his path of inspiration and quest.

Evaristo Hernández Fernández was born in Puebla City, Mexico, which was founded by the Spanish in 1531. One can easily imagine being swept up in the history and culture of this fourth largest city in Mexico, but Evaristo discovered early on the treasures of the great outdoors. His father, his most important initial influence, would take Evaristo outdoors to explore the natural world of their backyard: “My dad taught me how to approach birds and insects to have a better look at them, he also taught me to respect them...” wrote Evaristo in a recent email. The house was full of books, and Evaristo was drawn to those about nature; at the age of six or seven he was so enraptured by one on mammals of Africa that he cut out photos to paste in his school notebook. He doesn’t say how dad felt about this! Not yet drawn to drawing, young Evaristo enjoyed “making plasticine figurines of dinosaurs ... and many more four-legged creatures.”

Things changed dramatically on his finding, during a visit to his sister’s place, Peterson’s field guide to Mexican birds. His sister was studying the new field of ecology engineering and Evaristo, though still in elementary school, would help her with her homework on the



*Hummingbirds.*



*At work in the studio.*

insect and other samples she brought home. One day she took him to a presentation on bird migration in the Puebla region – Evaristo was fascinated to discover new species so close to home, illustrated by “beautiful drawings of birds....” His sister was getting into the study of birds for her courses and among the books she brought home was the Peterson Field Guide. Evaristo was hooked, amazed and fascinated by the colour plates – paintings, not photographs – of 1000 species.



He immediately commandeered the Guide and began making his own copy. Soon overwhelmed, but undaunted, he continued reading the many books found around the house and those his sister provided from the library. His father bought him a set of nine illustrated volumes of animals of the world. Remember, we are still talking about an elementary school kid here!

Evaristo's interest in nature only grew as he reached high school. Although taking a break from drawing, he had already decided to become a scientist. By the end of high school, he had purchased his first painting supplies and taken up, with "no formal art training," the painting of birds. He spent hours of his own time outside in biology courses at college to experiment and learn about his craft, helped by an upgrade in materials. He turned his early interest in dinosaurs into a

successful sideline, selling paintings of dinosaurs to other students, earning enough to cover the costs of his second year. Evaristo had also added other painters to his growing list of artistic influences. He noted in a recent email that "probably three of the five greatest influences in my artwork are the magnificent Canadian artists Robert Bateman and Fenwick Lansdowne (actually born in Hong Kong, but raised and educated in Canada) and the Australian William T. Cooper."



*Black-vented Oriole.*



*Steller's Jay*



Evaristo describes himself as an introvert, but if so, he is clearly an introvert with courage. He reached out beyond his college, which at that time had no resident ornithologists. On hearing of a bird-banding program in Jalisco state, he contacted Eduardo Santana Castellón, a wildlife ecologist who had completed a PhD at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and was teaching at the University of Guadalajara. Castellón did not reply to Evaristo's first query, so Evaristo sent a second with a selection of his paintings. This one worked: Castellón invited Evaristo to attend his international field course and join the bird-banding program in Jalisco. This experience was literally an eye-opener for Evaristo,

his first real taste of bird science in the wild. He went on to complete a Bachelor in Science studying molting in warblers. This topic if nothing else is evidence of his ability to observe – warblers are difficult enough, but molting and seasonal colour changes?!?

Evaristo stayed with the program for three years, then went to the US for three months to participate in a shorebird banding program. Here he heard about Cornell University's bird illustration program, but this idea lay fallow while he worked for a time at a botanical garden, creating an illustrated (and unfortunately unpublished) catalogue. His application for graduate studies with Santana Castellón at the University of Guadalajara was successful, but a back injury forced a postponement. While recovering, Evaristo explored Cornell's program. His enquiries resulted in an invitation to join the Bartels' Bird Illustration Internship. [See Bartels Science Illustration Internship Program, <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/Page.aspx?pid=2237>.] Invitation accepted, Evaristo secured another deferment of his MSc and went off to Ithaca, New York, for what was to be a three-month stint. Life happens, as they say: a chance encounter with the Bartels, sponsors of the program, led to an invitation to spend another nine months at Cornell. This proved to be a boon, for his skills were in demand, resulting in a second full year at Ithaca. He worked on illustrations for a number of articles, including one on woodpeckers. He also helped illustrate the French and English editions of a two-volume guide to the oaks. Evaristo provided paintings of several species of jays for the second edition of the French

original, published in 2010. (*Guide illustré des Chênes*, 2 volumes, by Antoine le Hardy de Beaulieu & Thierry Lamant.) The English edition, expected in 2018, includes the Acorn Woodpecker and Steller's Jay paintings shown here, as well as several new paintings made for this edition. A painting of the long-lost Imperial Woodpecker (*Campephilus imperialis*) was his "most demanding" piece, published in October 2011 as a cover for *The Auk* magazine, reproduced on page 210. This was an important project, prepared for the account of a 2010 expedition to the area identified in recently discovered 1956 film footage of the Imperial Woodpecker. [Evaristo discusses this project in Cornell's YouTube video "Painting the Imperial Woodpecker", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNJQyYr2gnY>; he discusses how he came to be an illustrator in "Science and Art", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQ82u1QxVN&feature=youtu.be>. You can learn how to draw your own woodpecker with "How to Draw a Woodpecker" at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aJult\\_q5A0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aJult_q5A0).]

Evaristo made other contributions through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. In 2007, the Lab launched Celebrate Urban Birds, a two-way program aimed at introducing people of all ages to the birds sharing their neighbourhoods while providing them the opportunity to be citizen scientists, reporting their findings for analysis by the Lab. Evaristo prepared about a dozen paintings for a new brochure on the program, published in October 2012. [<http://celebrateurbanbirds.org/news/new-pamphlet-connects-people-with-nature/>] Earlier that year, he had participated in the inaugural weekend at Cornell's Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary of an offshoot program, Art and Science and City Kids in the Woods. [<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/art-and-science-and-city-kids-in-the-woods/>] The kids came from various cities, including Ottawa! The weekend included quick classes with folks from the Cornell Lab, among them Evaristo's discussion of scientific illustration.

Evaristo returned to Mexico later in 2012, starting his MSc at the University of Guadalajara the next year. His painting and bird studies continued. Two of his paintings, shown here, are now in my proud possession: the Steller's Jay and Acorn Woodpeckers. These were among paintings prepared for the English edition of the book on oak trees. Yet another opportunity he couldn't resist interrupted his studies once again. Steve Lougheed, Director



*Acorn Woodpecker*





*Painting of the Imperial Woodpecker for the cover of  
The Auk, Volume 128, Issue 4, October 2011.*



of the Queen's University Biology Station (QUBS) near Kingston, Ontario, was teaching a field course at the University of Guadalajara's Las Joyas research station in 2015. Evaristo was studying woodpeckers in the field at this time and hadn't heard of the field course. However, he and Lougheed met through a serendipitous stroke based on the luck of the weather – heavy rains had delayed Evaristo's field work until the time Lougheed's course began. Lougheed happened by as Evaristo was working, from memory, on a painting of a sapsucker, and liked what he saw. He invited Evaristo to give his students a presentation on nature illustration. The upshot was Lougheed's invitation to come to QUBS as artist-in-residence in the summer of 2016.

He was still there when a group of us descended on the place for a week-long Fabulous Fall Fungi workshop. As noted in my earlier article on the FFF workshop (*Trail & Landscape* Volume 51, Number 1, pages 13-16), our overlap was brief: our group met Evaristo on Monday night after our first full day and he was in the process of wrapping up his residency to leave that Wednesday. While woodpeckers continued to be his main focus, Evaristo confessed that we "fungus guys have one of the most interesting subjects of study." He joined us for meals when he could and wasn't alone in enjoying the cook's fabulous chicken-of-the-woods, prepared only after group study, of course.

Since the workshop, Evaristo and I have been corresponding by email. He has shared freely information about his life and development as a painter of birds. His studies – academic and informal – continue, as does his progress as an illustrator. Life holds no guarantees, but my bet is that this young man will continue to make his mark as an important nature artist. The world of birds – and bird guides – holds room for another painter of quality. 🦋

*The OFNC wishes to thank Evaristo for giving us permission to include pictures of his paintings in Trail & Landscape.*

### **Five Senses** *By Linda Jeays*

The carcass of the mouse,  
though small, is putrid...  
offends the nose.  
Crawling with tiny scavengers  
it is an eyesore on the driveway,  
and repellent to the touch  
of an ungloved hand.

But the raucous calls of crows  
from the maple tree overhead  
clearly indicate that the carrion  
is to their taste.

I retreat from the scene  
to let nature take its course.

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# Index to Volume 51

## SUBJECTS

### 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Brief History of Bird Guide Books, A.....	130
Fifty Years of Nature in and around Ottawa.....	106
Happy Birthday, T&L, from your President! .....	96
Producing <i>Trail &amp; Landscape</i> by Computer for a Quarter of a Century.....	103
T&L: A Walk Down Memory Lane .....	98

### Amphibians and Reptiles

Hormonal Induction of Spawning for the Captive Breeding and Conservation of Amphibians.....	132
In a Drought, July Showers Bring May Calling.....	135
Victory! An End to the Snapping Turtle Hunt.....	139
Surveying for New Populations of Blanding's Turtles.....	7

### Birds

Brief History of Bird Guide Books, A.....	130
Falcons in my Neighbourhood .....	189
In Praise of Turkey Vultures .....	193
OFNC Bird Records Sub-committee (BRSC) Activities 2016.....	70
Ottawa's Falcon Watch Update.....	190
Summary of the Bird Observations from the Ottawa Area for 2016.....	146
What's Wrong, Mrs. Mallard? .....	162
When do the Birds Arrive? Spring bird migration charts for Ottawa: 1967 and 2017 .....	182

### BioBlitz

Larose Forest BioBlitz: 2016, The .....	141
---	-----

### Club Business, News and History

Call for Award Nominations .....	178
Annual Business Meeting, The 138th .....	42
Big Questions about that Big Bequest.....	47
Coming Events.....	30, 78, 165, 215
"Golden Anniversary" Membership List 1943-2017 .....	39
Highlights from the 2015-2016 Annual Committee Reports .....	43
Letter from the Editor .....	95, 175
Makeover for <i>Trail &amp; Landscape's</i> 50th Birthday, A .....	6
OFNC Awards Night, The 2017 .....	49
OFNC Committees for 2017 .....	46

OFNC Research Grants: Announcing the 2016 Winners .....	4
OFNC Research Grants: Call for Proposals for 2017 .....	28
OFNC Research Grants: Call for Proposals for 2018 .....	180
President's Perspective .....	41
Welcome New Members .....	2, 38, 97, 176
Your OFNC Membership Number .....	3

## **Earthworms**

Earthworms: Pathway for Invasion .....	17
--	----

## **In Memoriam**

Ray Holland (1944 – 2017) .....	177
---------------------------------	-----

## **Insects**

New Species Additions to the Ottawa-Gatineau Odonate Checklist .....	195
Ode-ing in Ottawa's Urban Ponds .....	10
Search for the Weird and Wonderful Slug Moth Caterpillars (Limacodidae), A .....	156

## **Macoun Club**

Spotlight on Young Naturalists: The Macoun Club's President's Speech at the 2017 OFNC Awards Night .....	58
--	----

## **Mammals**

Sanctimonious Shorty .....	198
----------------------------	-----

## **Miscellaneous**

Mexican Artist Comes to Canada, A .....	204
Slow Awakening, A .....	76

## **Molluscs**

Is the Widespread Column Introduced or Not? .....	63
---	----

## **Plants, Trees and Fungi**

Fabulous Fall Fungi .....	164
Fabulous Fall Fungi Workshops – 7 years of 'shrooming and still going strong .....	13
Invasive Anthems .....	24
Measuring the Length of Winter using Field Pennycress .....	68
Why does Pollen Colour Vary in Trout Lily ( <i>Erythronium americanum</i> )? .....	60

## **Poetry**

February .....	17
Five Senses .....	211
Perseids .....	163
Ralph the Randy Earthworm .....	23
Spring Thaw .....	70



---

# AUTHORS

Aaron, Richard .....	164
Austen, Emily .....	60
Bélair, Annie .....	6, 42, 43, 95, 98, 103, 175
Catling, Paul .....	63, 68
Citron, Murray .....	23
Cottam, Barry .....	13, 204
Dobson, Annise .....	17
Hanrahan, Christine .....	141, 156
Jeays, Linda .....	17, 70, 163, 211
John, Roy .....	130, 162, 177, 193
Karstad, Aleta .....	24, 135
Kostiuk, Brenda .....	63, 68
Lee, Robert E. ....	106, 198
Lehmann, Susan .....	76
Lepage, Diane .....	41, 96
MacKenzie, Ann .....	47
McMurren, Gabriel .....	58
Mooney, Norma .....	189
OFNC Awards Committee .....	178
OFNC Publications Committee .....	4, 28, 180
Ovenden, Lynn .....	46
Periard, Luke .....	49
Perron, Mary Ann .....	10
Poulin, Rémy .....	70
Reddoch, Joyce M. ....	103
Schueler, Frederick W. ....	24, 135
Seburn, David .....	7, 139
Steger, Henry .....	2, 38, 39, 97, 176
Traynor, Chris .....	190, 195
Vu, Maria .....	132
Zbitnew, Gregory .....	146, 182



*Newly constructed urban pond in Barrhaven, Ottawa, Ontario. Photo by M.A. Perron, with her article “Ode-ing in Ottawa’s Urban Ponds”, T&L 51(1), pages 10-12.*



# Coming Events

## PLEASE NOTE:

The OFNC website ([ofnc.ca](http://ofnc.ca)) contains the most up-to-date information on events. Please check it regularly for additions or changes to events. The Club's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/groups/379992938552/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/379992938552/)) and Twitter account (@*OttawaFieldNat*) may also be used to announce last-minute changes to events.

Several events require participants to register. Please consult the details in the event description.

We expect to have several more events to offer that could not be finalized prior to the publication deadline for *Trail & Landscape*. These will be announced as soon as possible on the website. Other weather- and year-dependent events can only be announced at the last minute, via the website, Facebook and Twitter.

## ALL OUTINGS:

Field trips to natural areas in our region and beyond take place all year round. OFNC events are for members only. Prospective members with interest in attending should contact the trip leader in advance. For some events, participation is limited and members will be given priority. All participants will be asked to sign a waiver. Times given for events are departure times. Please arrive earlier, as leaders start promptly. If you need a ride, please contact the leader.

Please bring a lunch on full-day trips and dress according to the weather forecast and activity. Please always wear long pants and closed-toe shoes. Binoculars and/or spotting scopes are essential on all birding trips. Unless otherwise stated, transportation will be by carpool.

## MONTHLY MEETINGS:

Our monthly meetings are held in the K.W. Neatby Building, Salon B, at 960 Carling Avenue. There is ample free parking in the lot on the west side of Maple Drive by Carling Ave., immediately to the east of the main entrance to the Neatby Building. Monthly meetings are open to the general public.

## EVENTS ORIENTED TO ALL AGES:

Kids are welcome on all of our trips. We highlight some hikes as "oriented to all ages" as these are most likely to be enjoyed by typical children. Depending on your child(ren)'s interests and stamina, please feel free to bring them along on any events. For events tailored to kids, check out the Macoun Field Club (<http://www.ofnc.ca/macoun/index.php>).

---

**Saturday October 7**

**7:30 a.m. to noon**

## **FALL BIRDING AT BRITANNIA**

**Leader:** Ken Allison

**Meet:** Entrance to the Mud Lake hiking trail along Cassels Street, near the water treatment plant, north of Britannia Park. Parking is along Cassels Street on either side. Carpooling is encouraged. The OC Transpo bus #16 provides service into Britannia.

**Description:** The Britannia Conservation Area is an excellent migrant trap in both spring and fall. This trip will concentrate on later migrants, especially waterfowl on Mud Lake and the Ottawa River. Depending on where birds have been reported, we might move west up the river to Andrew Haydon Park or Shirley's Bay. Dress for the weather and remember it is always colder along the water. Bring binoculars and a scope if you have one. Waterproof footwear would be a good idea.

---

### **Monthly Meeting**

**Tuesday October 10**

#### **MY 'TRAMP' WITH DR. VAN: A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY WITH OTTAWA'S PIONEER NATURALIST**

**7:00 p.m.** Social

**7:30 p.m.** Presentation

**Speaker:** Randy Boswell

**Location:** Salon B, K.W. Neatby Building, Central Experimental Farm, 960 Carling Avenue

**Description:** Dr. Edward Van Cortlandt was a 19<sup>th</sup>-century physician best known to Ottawa history as a hard-working, eccentric medical man with a peculiar interest in collecting objects for his widely admired "cabinet of curiosities." All true, but there is much more. At a time when Victorian science was coalescing into a vital nation-building force in Canadian society, Van Cortlandt's diverse and energetic explorations in the broadly defined realm of "natural history" – from geology and archaeology to botany and zoology – helped shape the intellectual culture of a new country and its burgeoning, backwoods capital. Recent research into Van Cortlandt's activities has shed fresh light on his significant contributions to Canadian environmental history, including the formative phase of what became the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club.

*Monthly meetings are open to the general public.*



**Saturday October 14**  
**9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

## **GREEN'S CREEK**

**Leader:** Jakob Mueller

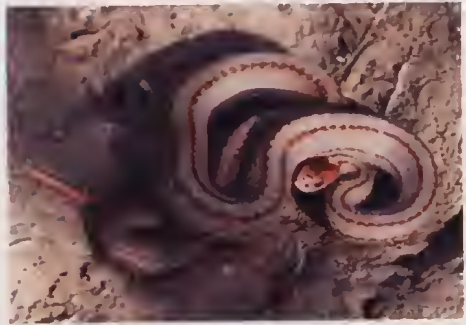
**Location:** NCC Parking Lot P8 off of the Sir George Etienne Cartier Parkway (formerly the Rockcliffe Parkway). Note: This is neither the greenbelt parking lot in Stony Swamp, nor the greenbelt parking lot P26 labelled for Green's Creek.

See the following directions.

**Directions:** Enter the parkway from St. Joseph Boulevard - following the parkway as it winds north and then west, you will cross a large bridge (over Green's Creek); the lot will be on your left shortly afterwards. (To reach St. Joseph from the city centre, take Hwy 417 to Hwy 174, exiting at Montreal Road. Turn right (east) at the intersection, cross a bridge and go up a hill to an intersection, where you can turn left onto the parkway.)

**Description:** Green's Creek is an under-appreciated feature of the city's greenbelt, with a number of interesting natural features. The creek meanders through an unusual deep clay valley. A diversity of plants are here, including the region's only population of Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), a late-blooming shrub more common farther south. For the birders, some fall migrants can be expected. If the weather is warm, we might see a number of reptiles and amphibians.

**Registration:** Please register for this event with Jakob by emailing [jm890\\_7@hotmail.com](mailto:jm890_7@hotmail.com).



*The Northern Red-bellied Snake (Storeria occipitomaculata) blends in well with the clay soils that surround Green's Creek. It is part of a diverse herpetofauna found in the watershed.*  
*Photo by Jakob Mueller.*

**Sunday October 15**

**8:00 a.m. to noon**

**\*oriented to all ages\***

## **DUCKS AND GULLS ALONG THE RIVER**

**Leader:** Roy John

**Meet:** Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road, near Pizza Pizza.

**Description:** Outing will consist of a stop or stops along the Ottawa River, depending on what has been sighted and where, to look for Fall migrants. This is a rain or shine walk, so dress for the weather. Bring binoculars, a scope if you have one, a drink and a snack.

This trip MIGHT go on DND property at Shirley's Bay where access can be by OFNC members only - the range officer will check the OFNC membership list. Those not on the list will have to wait for a time (1 hour?) in the parking lot.

**Saturday November 4**

**(Rain date is November 11)**

**9:00 a.m. to noon**

## **GEOLOGY FIELD TRIP, GATINEAU PARKWAY LOOP, GATINEAU PARK**

**Leader:** Chris Rochefort

**Meet:** Parking lot 8, Meech Road at Gatineau Parkway

**Description:** On this field trip, participants will observe igneous and metamorphic rocks along with geological structures such as folds, dykes and faults. There are many intrusions in the rocks which were deformed approx. 1,000 million years ago. Dress for anticipated weather. We will go even if there is a light drizzle or snow. We will postpone to November 11 if there is rain. Chris will be wearing his orange safety vest in order to be highly recognizable when members arrive. **Please note:** The parkway will be closed to motor vehicles but there could be many cyclists present, especially if the weather is good. A safety vest is highly recommended.

**Saturday November 4**

**8:00 a.m. to noon**

## **WILD GOOSE CHASE!**

**Leaders:** Tony Beck & Nina Stavlund

**Meet:** Petrie Island Causeway, north of the intersection Highway 174 and Trim Road (Orleans). "North" will be to your left if you are driving from Ottawa.

### **Description:**

In early November, most of our local agricultural fields have been harvested and cut. This provides open views from the roadside where birds are easily observed as they forage through the stubble. Although many will have already passed through, we'll still witness much evidence of migration. After a quick check of the Ottawa River for diving ducks, we'll drive through open country east of Ottawa looking for Sandhill Cranes, various geese, gulls and hawks. We'll check all flocks of waterfowl for unusual species like Ross's Goose or Greater White-fronted Goose. Recent late-fall migrations have produced thousands of Greater Snow Geese – an extremely impressive sight. While checking the Snow Geese, we hope to find a mega-rarity; the Pink-footed Goose!

This trip will only be cancelled if we have severe weather conditions. Listen to the weather forecast and dress accordingly. The leaders encourage you to carpool as this will help the group to stick together and stay safe along roadways. Bring binoculars and telescopes.

Contact the leaders if you have questions: [TonysAlwaysAnAdventure@gmail.com](mailto:TonysAlwaysAnAdventure@gmail.com)



*Geese in 2015. Photo by Tony Beck.*

## Monthly Meeting

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### METEORS AND METEORITES – ROCKS FROM THE SKY

**Tuesday November 14**

**7:00 p.m.** Social

**7:30 p.m.** Presentation

**Speaker:** Howard Simkover

**Location:** Salon B, K.W. Neatby Building, Central Experimental Farm,  
960 Carling Avenue.

For hundreds of thousands of years, humans have gazed up into the night sky at shooting stars. These sudden flashes of light – called meteors – are caused by tiny particles from space plunging into the Earth's atmosphere at very high speeds, and burning up. Several times per year, such as during the Perseids in mid-August, we experience a meteor shower. Perhaps we've all had the experience of "wishing on a falling star."

On occasion, a much larger "rock from space" – a meteorite – enters the atmosphere and can even impact the surface of our planet, causing a crater. As far as we know, only one person has ever been struck by a falling meteorite. In February 2013, a huge object from space exploded over the city of Chelyabinsk, Russia, leading to thousands of injuries from flying glass. It appears that 65.5 million years ago, something much worse happened to the dinosaurs, who experienced a very bad day when an asteroid the size of Ottawa came calling....

Howard Simkover, who has produced shows for Montreal's Dow Planetarium, will share his experiences and knowledge of meteors and meteorites.

*Monthly meetings are open to the general public.*

**Saturday November 18**

**8:45 or 9:00 a.m. to noon**

### BIRDS AND GENERAL INTEREST RAMBLE IN THE OTTAWA RIVER CORRIDOR

**Leaders:** Bev McBride and Dave Moore

**Meet:** In the Lincoln Fields shopping centre parking behind the Pizza Pizza (Richmond Road and Assaly Road) OR at 9:00 at the Britannia Conservation Area (Mud Lake), Cassells St., at the small parking area near the filtration plant driveway entrance.

**Description:** We will take our time checking spots along the Ottawa River between the Britannia Conservation Area and Shirley's Bay, if we get that far. We will look for birds and anything else of natural history interest. We will focus on enjoying whatever we find. Dress to be warm, dry and wind resistant! Bring binoculars, a spotting scope and a hand lens if you have them, but these are not essential. We will go rain or shine.



## Monthly Meeting

### MOTHS AND NOTHING IN THE OTTAWA REGION

**Tuesday December 12**

**7:00 p.m.** Social

**7:30 p.m.** Presentation

**Speaker:** Diane Lepage

**Location:** Salon B, K.W. Neatby Building, Central Experimental Farm, 960 Carling Avenue

**Description:** Join OFNC President Diane Lepage as she discusses the diversity of moth species found in our area. You will learn all about the fascinating world of moths, primarily the macromoths, but Diane will also touch on micromoths, taxonomy, food plants, equipment, best time of year and locations to go mothing, and how she goes about finding them.

*Monthly meetings are open to the general public.*

*Spiny Oak-slug Moth  
(Euclea delphinii)  
during a mothing evening  
in Constance Bay, June 2015.  
Photo by Annie Bélair.*



## Monthly Meeting

### 139th ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

**Tuesday January 9, 2018**

**7:00 p.m.** Social

**7:30 p.m.** Formal program

**Location:** Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretive Centre

**Description:** The Board of Directors for 2018 will be elected at this meeting. There will be a brief review of the activities in 2017 and a statement of the Club's finances will be given. This is an opportunity to meet most of the Club's executives and the chairs of the various committees, and to find out what makes your Club tick.

Saturday January 27, 2018

7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

\*oriented to all ages\*

## 5th ANNUAL MEMBERS' PHOTOGRAPHY NIGHT

**Leaders:** Barry Cottam and Hume Douglas

**Location:** K.W. Neatby Building, 960 Carling Avenue.

**Description:** If you take natural history photos, this is your opportunity to share some of your images with fellow members. The mix of different topics and voices makes for an enjoyable evening. Contributions may be 7-10 minutes long. We can handle most digital presentations (images on a flash-drive), and even conventional slides (with some warning please). We encourage presenters to speak about their images. Please contact Hume Douglas (humedgl@gmail.com) or Barry Cottam (b.cottam@rogers.com) so that we can organize the presentations.

### ANY ARTICLES FOR *TRAIL & LANDSCAPE*?

Have you been on an interesting field trip or made some unusual observations?  
Write up your thoughts and send them to *Trail & Landscape*!

DEADLINE: Material for the January-March issue must be in the editor's hands by **November 1, 2017**. Send your articles to:

Annie Bélair

annie.TandL@gmail.com

613-832-7802

Vous pouvez m'écrire en français également.

[www.ofnc.ca](http://www.ofnc.ca)

613-234-6767



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Club des naturalistes d'Ottawa

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